



## BRAZIL VS ENGLAND Judgement Day

AFP/REUTERS, Shizuoka

The meanest defence comes face to face with the most potent strike force here on Friday as World Cup favourites Brazil take on England in a potential classic quarter-final clash.

With Ronaldo and Rivaldo in sparkling form the Brazilians have scored an impressive 13 goals in four matches while England's miserly rearguard have leaked just one in the same number of games.

If England can beat the multi-talented South Americans they have an excellent chance to win the trophy they won for the first and only time back in 1966.

But Sven-Goran Eriksson's side, conquerors of pre-tournament favourites Argentina in the group stages, first have to tame five-goal Ronaldo and four-goal Rivaldo if they are to set up a semifinal clash against Senegal or Turkey.

Gritty midfielder Nicky Butt, who has stepped out of the shadows to help steer England to the last eight, believes every player has to be aware of his defensive responsibilities if they are to silence the samba kings.

"The game can be won if we defend right and that applies to the whole team," he said.

"The midfield and the forwards

will have to come back and help out as well. Generally it's going to be a team effort because Brazil have so many world class players who can change a game in a second.

"It's going to be difficult but if we defend well as a team we can get at them."

Veteran striker Teddy Sheringham said Brazil would provide England with their toughest test yet but was encouraged by what he saw when the South Americans beat Belgium 2-0 in the previous round.

"They're very good going forward with plenty of flair and the crowd love seeing them. They're always likely to score goals," he said.

"They all showed glimpses of brilliance and that gives us something to think about. We have to be wary all over the pitch.

"But the Belgians had a lot of opportunities against them and that gives you a lot of hope. They had a goal disallowed that looked good enough to us and that would have changed the game.

"We have to be on top of our game from the very start. We have to attack and be positive and not let them come on to us or we will be in trouble.

"We also have to make sure we are ready for everything they throw at us and give as good as get."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



PHOTO: AFP

DON'T WORRY, WE WILL PROTECT YOU! Michael Owen (C) is flanked by England defender Sol Campbell (L) and forward Darius Vassel at Shizuoka yesterday.

## Scolari being secretive

REUTERS, Shizuoka

Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari left a whiff of mystery in the air before the World Cup quarter-final against England after he again decided against holding a full-blown training match on Thursday.

For the second-day in a row, Brazil -- who have had only three days to recover from their second round game against Belgium on Monday -- enjoyed a light-hearted kickaround using only half the pitch.

Training matches between Brazil's

first team and reserves are usually strong indicators of the team to be fielded in the next game.

Scolari said earlier this week that, in principle, he would be fielding the same team which started against Belgium.

He has always insisted, however, that he will alter his team depending on the opposition and there is speculation he could opt to beef up his midfield, which at times has looked short of manpower and has left the defence exposed.

One option could be to introduce Kleberston in place of Juninho, as the

former is stronger in the tackle.

Kleberston had a good 20 minutes after coming on as a substitute against Belgium. He set up the late second goal for Ronaldo after charging down the right and delivering a perfect ball into the path of the Inter Milan player.

Rivaldo, who has scored in each of Brazil's four games, said there had been no indication of a change in the line-up.

"He (Scolari) hasn't made any

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

## God wasn't playing!

REUTERS, Yokohama

Only eight teams remain in this most thrilling of World Cups, while 24 have departed with the sad realisation that they did not -- after all -- have God sitting on the substitutes' bench.

Many mocked Italy coach Giovanni Trapattoni for sprinkling "holy water" from the bench before big matches at the tournament and his side's shock 2-1 exit to South Korea would certainly suggest the Great Centre Forward in the Sky was not on his side.

But in this topsy-turvy World Cup, choc-a-bloc with upsets that have sent the likes of holders France, Argentina, Portugal and Italy packing, one thing is certain -- players, fans and coaches will not stop banking on "outside help".

Whether it's simply wearing the same underpants for each match or burying an animal in the centre circle at midnight before a big game, soccer nuts the world over will do anything to influence a result.

In Africa, the craziest practices -- on the face of it -- take place. The

use of witch doctors is so widespread that the Confederation of African Football (CAF), the region's ruling soccer body, was forced to ban them for this year's African Nations Cup. African Soccer magazine reported before the World Cup that there "was a common thread of spiritual practices -- animals sacrificed and their parts buried, midnight rituals, powders and smelly lotions that embraces every part of sub-Saharan Africa and spans every variation of football success".

Tellingly, though, none of the nations who use such practices qualified for the World Cup and, instead, countries like South Africa and quarter-finalists Senegal have deliberately eschewed all voodoo assistance on their path to the finals.

As guffawing South African striker Benni McCarthy told a reporter who asked, in all sincerity, if the team practised voodoo: "Don't worry. South Africa don't have anything to do with that.

"We practise fair play and I think

SEE PAGE 14 COL 6

## Africa's shining light

REUTERS, Nairobi

Africa will erupt with joy if Senegal make soccer history on Saturday and book the continent's first berth in the World Cup semifinals.

Africans are revelling in Senegal's stunning progress at the game's top tournament in South Korea and Japan.

The team's uninhibited style has won new recognition for a continent beset by bad news. Especially sweet was Senegal's opening win against former colonial boss France.

But a place in the semifinals -- offering a chance at the final and ultimately soccer's top prize -- would stamp Africa's identity on the world's

favourite sport as never before.

"Senegal has done Africa proud and we all stand as one in its support, willing it to greater heights at the World Cup," said South African Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

"It would be a huge celebration for the whole of Africa if they went all the way to the finals," said Hilare Kulenguluka, a newspaper-seller on the streets of Kinshasa.

After beating holders France 1-0 in their opening match, drawing 1-1 with Denmark and 3-3 with Uruguay,

and seeing off Sweden in the second round, Senegal go into the quarter-final against Turkey in Osaka confident they can win and book a con-

test against either England or Brazil. Kenya's Daily Nation commented: "For a moment we can forget famine, wars, presidents who cling on to power -- the issues that make Africa favourites of the world media in matters negative."

Besides lavishing praise on Senegal for becoming only the second African team to reach the Cup's quarter-finals -- after Cameroon in 1990 -- other African nations are now dreaming about emulating their success.

Simply drawing confidence from the debutants' gallant example is

SEE PAGE 14 COL 6

## Free-kick decider?

AFP/REUTERS, Shizuoka

Roberto Carlos has been dreaming of firing Brazil to a World Cup quarterfinal victory over England with one of his trademark bullet free-kicks.

The Real Madrid wing-back said it would be the icing on the cake if he were to score the goal which secured victory in Friday's last eight clash here at the Shizuoka stadium.

"Every day I have been dreaming of scoring from a free-kick against England," he said Thursday.

"That would be special but getting

the result and qualifying for the semi-finals is the most important thing.

"It's always nice to score but it's important to remain focused and play for the team. But to score the winning goal against England would make me very happy."

Roberto Carlos will face off against fellow free-kick specialist David Beckham but the hotshot Brazilian warned that the England captain was not the only player the Brazilians should fear.

"Beckham is a very good player, a dangerous player, but when you look at the England team there is quality

in every position," he said.

"I watched their win over Denmark in the second round and they were exceptionally strong in midfield.

"They fight for possession and don't allow you time on the ball, they work so hard for the whole 90 minutes.

"Their defence is strong too and with Michael Owen up front they are dangerous coming forward."

Roberto Carlos believes Brazil can unlock England's watertight

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5



PHOTO: AFP

DEADLY DEAD-BALL GENIUS: A combo of photos showing (L) Roberto Carlos the Brazilian thunderbolt and England's free-kick maestro David Beckham (R) in practice yesterday.

### CUP CORNER

REUTERS, Rome

Some two million collectable adhesive cards featuring Italy's World Cup squad have been withdrawn from sale in protest at the nature of Tuesday's shock 2-1 defeat to South Korea.

"We were left indignant after the South Korea game which went against the image of clean football we have promoted for so long," Umberto Leone, a director of publishers Panini, told Reuters.

"Clients have called to say they back the decision."

It will take at least 10 days to round up all the cards featuring players such as Francesco Totti, Alessandro Del Piero and Christian Vieri that are

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

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### TODAY'S MATCHES

<b>Brazil vs England</b> Venue: Shizuoka Time: 12:30 pm	<b>Germany vs USA</b> Venue: Ulsan Time: 5:30 pm
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## Seeking real Raul

REUTERS, Ulsan

Spanish hopes of halting the South Korean bandwagon in Saturday's World Cup quarter-final may well rest on the recovery of Raul, a player whose predatory instincts could finally unsettle the co-hosts.

The groin strain suffered by the striker in the second half of Spain's second round win over Ireland on Sunday looked little cause for concern at first, with Jose Antonio Camacho's squad lucky enough to have six days to prepare for their quarterfinal.

The medical bulletins coming from the Spanish camp have been positive enough but with three days to go he has still to return to the training pitch and team doctor Genaro Borras will only say he is moderately optimistic.

Camacho professes to be unconcerned about the injury, but few people in Spain will share that laid-back attitude.

There is no one else who can do the same job of hustling from midfield when Spain don't have the ball, starting attacks when his side win it back and finishing with skill and nerve.

Raul's scoring record going into the current World Cup was an impressive 25 goals in 51 games but he did find himself with something to prove after disappointing slightly in his two previous appearances in major tournaments.

In France in 1998 he managed one goal but could not prevent Spain going down 3-2 to Nigeria in their opening game and making a first round exit.

In the European Championship finals two years ago he was also far from his best, scoring once against Slovenia but missing a last minute penalty against France in the

quarterfinals that would have taken the game to extra time.

He immediately dispelled any

doubts about his head for heights

SEE PAGE 14 COL 2



PHOTO: AFP

FOOTBALL IS FUN: Spanish stars Raul (L) and Luis Enrique in a cheerful mood during practice at Suwon recently.